

next generation. But in the
 interfusion of
 marriage the qualities of the father
 very fre-
 quently miss descending to the son :
 and judging
 by the number of rich who rise from
 obscurity
 talents often take birth in the families
 of quite
 humble folk. Moreover, we must
 remember that
 our chief national indebtedness is to
 men not of
 aptitude but of genius who have
 generally risen
 from the undistinguished crowd and
 have contributed
 not children, but ideas to
 posterity. There
 are illustrations to show that striking
 originality
 may emerge even from negro
 parentage. In the
 present uncertainty of our knowledge
 it appears
 discreet to keep an open mind upon
 questions of
 heredity. Degenerate parents will
 breed liability
 to disease : by selective breeding size
 of stature,
 strength of muscles, and beauty of
 features may
 doubtless be promoted. But originality
 of genius
 is a more subtle character : it seems
 unaccount-
 ably to be allied with reproductive
 sterility. When
 so much is doubtful, theories are
 hazardous. It
 may be that, in their impulse to treat
 mankind
 from the purely physical standpoint,
 eugenists are
 leading us to such results as appear
 to have
 attended the Indian caste system. We
 have
 progressed by imitation : but we have
 been led
 by genius ; and no excellencies of body
 could
 compensate for the loss of
 upspringings
 of
 spontaneity.